

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Dr. H. S. Craig

DATE: May 26, 1955

FROM : Richard Hirsch *HC*

SUBJECT: Comments on Background Report #1.

Document No. _____

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☐ It contains nothing of CIA interestDate 27 JUNE 62 Reviewer 103420

My comments will be limited to Section 1, "War, Peace, and Atomic Weapons", since I have been dealing with this phase almost exclusively for the past year. I therefore offer the following:

1. The intelligence community and the Nuclear Energy Working Group has taken the position that public apprehensions are not reflected in the policies of Western European governments. The upcoming NIE 100-5-55, "Effects of Increased Nuclear Capabilities on Policies of Selected Countries", will state that increasing public apprehension over the possible use of nuclear weapons does not appear to have led to any significant increase in neutralization or to increased reluctance of our allies to stand with us ⁱⁿ defense preparations.

2. I would like to qualify the above judgment. I agree that there is no firm evidence that increasing public apprehension has in any way affected the policies of Western European governments. I suggest, however, that the worsening climate is a matter of serious concern to the U.S. Government and that if the trend continues, Western European government policy may very well be affected. Perhaps an analogy will illustrate the differences in viewpoint over the significance of these polling results. These results are like a darkening cloud on the horizon which is constantly getting blacker. The intelligence community and the Nuclear Energy Working Group people look at the cloud, admit that it is getting darker and larger, and conclude: "It still hasn't rained".

3. One means of avoiding rain has been for the U.S. to precommit its allies to decisions and actions in advance of any decision for war or peace, including the use of nuclear weapons. The tendency has been to set up through NATO and other instrumentalities a sequence of automatic responses which would shield the crucial decision to employ nuclear weapons from the possibility of either a political or popular veto. This was the implication of last year's NIE 100-54, which pointed out that: "If the Western alliance had come through a long period of cold war as an integrated and effective coalition, and, above all, if the intermeshing of political, economic, and military relationships had become highly developed, each member government might discover at the moment of crisis that a large part of the crucial decisions had in effect already been made. Under such circumstances any government might find it difficult though not necessarily impossible, to abandon its commitments, recall its forces, and reverse the whole trend of its foreign policy." And further, that "If the crisis should develop with great swiftness, it might make public debate upon policy

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almost impossible. In such a case, decision-making would tend to be concentrated in fewer hands than normally, and a few dominant powers in the alliance might make decisions which for all practical purposes would commit their lesser allies".

4. Implications of the above for future U.S. political-military-psychological strategy bearing upon the "Summit Conference", are that the U.S. should:

a. Continue major efforts to cement its alliances in the political, economic and military areas, recognizing the need to pre-commit the decision-making process with respect to employment of nuclear weapons for the defense of the free world to reduce the chances of a popular veto over their employment in the event of a swiftly-developing crisis.

b. Continue to demonstrate by vigorous, forceful and intelligible efforts towards a genuinely safeguarded disarmament, that the U.S. recognizes the deep-seated aspirations of the peoples of the free world with respect to the fundamental issues of war and peace.

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